



**ASIAN AMERICAN QUALITY OF LIFE ADVISORY COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES OF TUESDAY, JUNE 21, 2016**

The Asian American Quality of Life Advisory Commission convened in a regular meeting on Tuesday, June 21, 2016 at City Hall in Austin, Texas.

Vice Chair Vince Cobalis called the Board Meeting to order at 06:05 p.m.

Board Members in Attendance:

Aletta Banks, Vince Cobalis, Janki DePalma, Richard Jung (arrived at 6:12p.m.), Sonia Kotecha, Charles Lu (arrived at 6:10p.m.), Ann Okamura, Shubhada Saxena, Kara Takasaki, Kirk Yoshida (arrived at 6:11p.m.), Richard Yuen

Staff in Attendance: Rey Arellano, Jonathan Babiak (for Sarah Chen), Marion Sanchez, Taja Beekley

1. CITIZEN COMMUNICATIONS

Mr. Schiller Liao addressed the Commission regarding revising the Asian American Quality of Life survey report to include the Taiwanese community, and stated he would speak more under agenda item 5d.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

There was no change to the May 17, 2016 meeting draft minutes. Recommendation to approve the May 17, 2016 meeting minutes as presented in draft form was approved on Commissioner Sonia Kotecha motion, Commissioner Richard Yuen second on an 8-0 vote. (Commissioners Richard Jung, Charles Lu and Kirk Yoshida arrived after minutes were approved.)

3. OLD BUSINESS

a. Update on the AAQOL Initiative

Marion Sanchez provided update on the community engagement results to date: received 75 boxes and reached validity threshold; over 3,000 comments and close to 900 surveys to supplement Dr. Jang's survey. Data cleanup will be done by end of month for analysis. Timeline: July and August report writing with draft report completed by end of August.

b. Discussion and possible action on Budget Policy Recommendations

Commissioner Yoshida stated that the document presented today is a companion document to the detailed budget recommendations approved last month, providing context to the budget items. He thanked Commissioner Takasaki's assistance and asked about next steps. Executive Liaison Rey Arellano replied Staff Liaison Sarah Chen can coordinate with the Health and Human Services Committee agenda liaison to put it on the committee agenda. Marion Sanchez stated it is on the Hispanic Latino Quality of Life Commission agenda tomorrow as a proposal to work together. Commissioner Yuen asked about ways to push budget items forward. Mr. Arellano stated affected departments will be provided their respective recommendations, and formal recommendation will be provided to City Manager and Council.

Chair Jung arrived at 6:12 pm, and Vice Chair Cobalis turned meeting over to the Chair.

Recommendation to accept the AAQOL budget recommendations to be forwarded to the City Manager's Office was approved on Commissioner Kirk Yoshida motion, Commissioner Vince Cobalis second on an 11-0 vote.

Chair Jung wanted to clarify if the recommendation should go to the Health and Human Services Committee (HHSC) or City Council. Mr. Arellano stated will ask Sarah Chen to schedule with the HHSC.

Chair Jung moved item 5(a) to allow staff to present and leave the meeting early.

5. NEW BUSINESS

a. Discussion and possible action on AARC kitchen renovation construction plans

David Taylor, PWD project manager, John McKennis, PARD project coordinator and Taja Beekley, AARC facility manager, provided status report on the AARC kitchen renovation construction and impact on AARC operations and senior meals program. Mr. Taylor stated delays due to consultant staff turnover, community advisory group review and major changes to scope, along with City reviews and comments pushed the timeline for contracting to end of July and completion by end of November. Vice Chair Cobalis asked about penalty for delays and budget, and asked Ms. Beekley to discuss impact of delays to AARC operations. Ms. Beekley reported two issues: 1) having to do contract amendments for facility rentals due to uncertainty of kitchen access and necessity to reallocate classroom space for event usage; and 2) senior meal program vendors on the Master Agreement having to use closed container instead of serving from the kitchen, with added cost and resulted in fewer meals ordered. Commissioners asked and discussed causes for delays, possible budget overrun, contractor rotation, concerns of higher overhead for caterers, and expressed hope that kitchen will be available before end of year.

Resolution that the Commission strongly encourages the City to complete construction no later than December 2016 was approved on Commissioner Vince Cobalis motion, Commissioner Ann Okamura second on an 11-0 vote.

Mr. Schiller Liao would like to address this agenda item but did not sign up for this item before the meeting under Citizen Communication. Chair Jung stated the requirement for Citizen Communication sign-up and sought Commissioners opinion. All allowed this communication.

Mr. Liao expressed that July through November were AARC's busy season and that having construction during this time would be hard on operations. He suggested to have all shop drawings approved but push construction to December. Chair Jung stated concern that delayed construction would bleed into February. Commissioners discussed not wanting to encourage additional delays, as well as impact on caterers. Chair Jung asked Mr. Liao to work with the AARC Issues Working Group to work on community access during construction.

Chair Jung moved item 5(d) since three speakers signed up for Citizen Communications under this agenda item.

d. Discussion and possible action on new research/special projects related to the initial Asian American Quality of Life survey

Taiwanese community representatives Michael Chen, Jack Chen and Schiller Liao spoke against the draft AAQOL survey report in which Taiwanese was included in the Chinese count, and urged the Commission to recognize the differences between Taiwanese Americans and Chinese, to not assume Taiwanese as Chinese. Mr. Jack Chen presented a petition signed by members of the

Taiwanese community. Mr. Liao made a PowerPoint presentation showing the differences in survey instruments and analysis of preliminary survey report data on Taiwanese Americans.

Chair Jung expressed appreciation of the Taiwanese community's concern which was taken seriously. He explained the Commission followed the US Census and stated the following concerns: 1) separating Taiwanese may be worse than inclusion due to possibility of leaving out a large part of the population, 2) all ethnic groups are significant regardless of the size of the population, thus the survey allowed self-identification in order to capture data on as many language groups as possible. Chair Jung appreciated the perspective of Taiwanese Americans' need to be a separate group, but urged their understanding that the Commission's job is to try to include as many non-English language speakers as possible in the survey to see who needed healthcare, mental healthcare, and who has a lot of elderly people being served, to identify issues for the larger Asian population. He invited staff to respond before engaging in discussions.

Marion Sanchez invited the Taiwanese community to participate in the community outreach discussions. She reported that the test survey had an "other" category to capture other language groups, and that the supplemental survey developed by the City was not limited to the 5 groups for data collection. Marion stated that Dr. Jang is out of the country but indicated in an email that the Taiwanese data was sufficient for a separate analysis. However, discussions need to occur after Dr. Jang returns. The City survey collected over 20 different ethnicities and data is being analyzed. Marion presented preliminary data from the Taiwanese sub-set. From the City's survey data collection, reports can be generated for all ethnicities that responded to the survey and the data will be made available in open data forum for all who are interested to create their own analysis.

There was confusion and discussion of the two surveys Mr. Liao presented. Commissioner Yuen speculated that one of them could be a test instrument from the pilot study. There were also discussions of the historical and cultural aspects of separating the Taiwanese (Republic of China) population from the Chinese (People's Republic of China) from the immigration perspective. Chair Jung recommended that further detailed discussions should occur in the working group. With Commissioner Yuen departing and Commissioner Saxena leaving the Community Assessment Working Group, Commissioner Takasaki had been appointed as the new Chair and Commissioner Lu is a member. Chair Jung indicated that this working group will be formulating the next series of Quality of Life surveys. He advised all to be realistic, as the Commission needs to get input from all communities, and will certainly listen to and given credence to community input. Marion stated that the Council mandate was for City staff to understand our Asian community better so as to better provide services or create new services. Even though the results are not completed, the City has created changes by creating workshops about how to engage diverse populations, helping departments do better outreach efforts and better understanding of the diverse community, and there have been more requests for translation/interpretation services.

Commissioner Yuen stated that Dr. Jang would be able to parse out data and create reports based on community demand and interest, and that was one of the reasons we included in the budget request to retain her as a research consultant. We have a rich dataset with many ways to dissect the data and identify specific, unique needs and populations with different identities and generational levels. He appreciated the Taiwanese community's expression of its identity and stated that is the same appreciation extended to all the groups in the Asian Austin community. Chair Jung stated the significance of the data, the City will do better outreach with the results and the community will understand what other communities need. Commissioners discussed special interest projects, the transition of working group members and retention of historic information, the roles of the Commission/academician/working group, as well as the importance of communication and interaction among working groups to address areas of specific concerns.

Return to Old Business on the agenda.

3. OLD BUSINESS

- c. Update on proposing names of Asian Americans for AISD school renaming
Item tabled.

- d. Working Group Reports

- 1) HR Diversity Issues Working Group

Commissioner DePalma reported that the HR Working Group met with HRD staff before the Commission meeting last month. HRD staff presented the complete hiring process which included completing an online application, meeting specific basic requirements, and if met, proceeded to interview process following stringent rules. Race or ethnicity cannot be listed as preferred qualification, only language can be listed. Best candidate based on the requirements is hired. Discussed cultural sensitivity training and skills testing and desire to work with the Commission. Commissioner Cobalis stated there is limited flexibility and departmental HR can help with the questions to better fit the needs, or have HR help applicants complete the online application. There is an employment specialist staffing the AARC one day a week. Commissioners felt HRD needs to be more proactive in recruitment and do more than placing an ad in the American Statesman. Chair Jung discussed being more flexible in recruitment and learning from other cities that have success in diversity hiring without violating civil service rules. Commissioner Saxena asked about having community participation in the hiring process. Commissioner Cobalis stated that Council appointed Commissioner can serve on an interview panel. Chair Jung stated that the Commission wants to help HRD stretch, providing creativity in a set routine and safe environment, by providing extra training and researching with other cities. HRD is working with other affinity groups, thus AAEN stopped coming to the meetings where policy was discussed. Chair Jung suggested separate meetings with AAEN to discuss outreach efforts. The HR Working Group will not meet again until after August. Commissioner DePalma asked Commissioners to send ideas to Sarah Chen in the meantime.

- 2) Education Working Group

In October, the Education Working Group will plan a site visit to the International Welcoming Center in the East Memorial High School, the orientation center for international students. Commissioners DePalma and Yoshida stated the group needs help with focus and how to work with AISD about their needs and challenges but not intruding into its operations. Chair Jung suggested working with a non-profit group that works exclusively with illiterate mothers and young children, parallel teach the mother and child how to read and write. The group currently works exclusively with Spanish speaking population, but may be helpful for the refugee population and help build a program for the Asian refugee population. Commissioner Lu suggested building pipeline of education into HR by working with Asian American students in community colleges and universities about opportunities in public administration. Commissioners discussed working with professors to help with the pipeline. Chair Jung reminded Commissioners the need is in the lower wage and executive level positions. Commissioner Saxena suggested shadowing opportunities for the refugee community. Commissioner Yuen suggested using the data for focused, strategic way to help refugee population and students about job opportunities.

4. STAFF BRIEFINGS

There was no staff briefing at this meeting.

5. NEW BUSINESS

b. Discussion and possible action on an alternate for the Joint Inclusion Committee

Commissioner Kotecha shared the meeting time of the Joint Inclusion Committee and discussed the need for an alternate. Chair Richard Jung nominated Commissioner Vince Cobalis to serve as the alternate for the Joint Inclusion Committee.

c. Discussion and possible action on formation of new working groups

Commissioners discussed new working groups and the needs of existing working groups. Chair Jung suggested Commissioner Okamura join the quality of life survey working group [sic. Community Assessment Working group] and address health issues.

d. Information Sharing (Standing Agenda Item)

Commissioner Cobalis that the Audit and Finance Committee will meet at 9AM tomorrow [6/22/2016] and the City Auditor will report on language access. The report is telling and timely since our budget recommendations are in line with some of the weaknesses found in the audit. Commissioner Cobalis plans make a statement that our budget recommendations can address some of the issues.

Commissioner Yuen announced that this is his last official Commission meeting. He has spoken with Council Member Renteria about his recommended replacement who represents the community that is not currently represented, and asked Commissioners to help with her appointment. Chair Jung stated there are currently three qualified applicants for the community appointment slot which was vacated due to the resignation of Commissioner Rajani Ramachandran.

Executive Liaison Arellano thanked Jonathan Babiak for covering the meeting.

Chair Jung shared there is a transportation bond in November and encouraged all to think as a community and consider it and to possibility to address it in a future meeting. Besides housing, transportation is the second largest issue for families and impacts a range of community members. Commissioner Yuen suggested that Chair Jung put it as a future agenda item, Discussion and potential action on a resolution on the transportation bond and a resolution to be forwarded to the Joint Inclusion Committee for discussion then be forwarded to the City.

Commissioner Saxena stated her interest in housing and is seeking other Asian American groups that are working on housing issues to work together.

Commissioner Yuen shared Central Health has moved forward with Sobriety Center for 4-5 years. Executive Liaison Arellano shared he is the staff lead on the Sobriety Center in partnership with the County and made a presentation today. Council is considering an Interlocal Agreement with the County to select the Medical Examiner's Building as the Sobriety Center. In terms of outreach, need to establish the board (4 appointed by City Council, 4 appointed by County Commissioners Court and 1 jointly) and bring on an Executive Director, the City/County will not run the facility and it will be run by a separate corporation.

Commissioner Cobalis is making a presentation of Asian American Health Assessment with recommendations to the AGCIC board in June.

6. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Commissioners discussed agenda items for the July 19, 2016 meeting and added one item to Old Business: Update on AARC kitchen renovation (PWD) as part of the AARC working group report, Dr. Jang is scheduled to come back in August.

7. ADJOURN

Recommendation adjourning the meeting was approved on Commissioner Charles Lu motion, Commissioner Sonia Kotecha second on an 11-0 vote. Chair Richard Jung adjourned the meeting at 8:41p.m.

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